

Republican Perspective

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by Ed Manning

A TREATY BY ANY OTHER NAME

Saddam Hussein has been engaged in the development of weapons of mass destruction technology which is a threat to countries in the region and he has made a mockery of the weapons inspection process. Nancy Pelosi

How disjointed is our foreign policy? In the midst of negotiating a six-party agreement to slow Iran's path to nuclear statehood, the New York Times reports that the Young Presidents Organization, a network of business executives, has just returned from its *third* trip to Iran. The visit to Iran by the American group included venture capitalists and business executives from a range of industries, including real estate, health care and insurance. Are they promoting green jobs?

At the same time, the Obama administration fortifies the US Navy to escort both US and British flagged commercial ships through the Strait of Hormuz. This is after the Iran Revolutionary Guard's naval ship intercepted a US flagged vessel and seized a Maersk Line cargo ship. Maersk reported that the Iranians say it is over a 2005 payment dispute.

The actions of the Iranian Navy are not being discussed in the nuclear talks. The White House did not even issue a condemnation. Neither is the release of three American hostages on the table. Nor are the continued development of Iran's inter-continental ballistic missiles that have wide ranging capabilities. The nuclear agreement is an Obama legacy item and the Iranians know it.

Russia's decision to sell its powerful antimissile defense system to Iran, prior to the lifting of international sanctions, is a game changer. Obama says he was surprised that Putin waited this long. Airstrikes against Iran's nuclear bomb factories are now much more difficult if not impossible.

Obama initially acted as a monarch and said that Congress would play no role in either reviewing or approving the Iran deal. He alone had the authority to grant permission for Iran to become a nuclear power. Only after Democrats questioned his dismissal of Congressional approval did he agree to their review.

Republican Bob Corker, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and Maryland Democrat Ben Cardin have sponsored a bill that requires Obama to present the agreement to the full Congress for a vote. The president has indicated that he would sign it. Call me a cynic, but if Obama agrees to a Congressional vote the deal is done.

Since this bill will be just a piece of regular legislation, Democrats could stop the Senate from voting on it at all. Republicans do not have enough votes in the Senate to invoke cloture and force a vote. The Corker-Cardin bill enables Congress to block the president from lifting sanctions for a designated review period. If Iran is not living up to the agreement, then the president can “snapback” sanctions. Should that come to fruition it means little as other nations will not again join. Remember that US business leaders have visited three times and are salivating over economic opportunities.

Should Congress vote to disapprove the deal, Obama will veto it and a Congressional override is as likely as the California drought ending this July. With their majority status, Republicans should insist that Obama submit this to Congress as a treaty requiring two-thirds Senate approval under the Constitution. Instead, they engage in a charade that might very well lead to a Middle East nuclear arms race. We all will be able to sleep well with the “death to America” radicals having their finger on the trigger.

Let’s not forget that the sanctions against Iran were working and this is what brought them to the table. Obama asks if we want war instead of his deal. No, Mr. President, we want the sanctions to continue and this time support the Iranian people when they revolt against the Mullahs.

Note: Republicans please visit the Contra Costa Central Committee’s website: www.contracostagop.org to stay current on candidates views and fundraisers.